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THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH KITCHEN.

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THE English are before all nations in bull-dogs; perhaps also in morals; but for the art of dressing themselves and their dinners the first honours are due by general acknowledgment to the French. The French are therefore entitled to our first and most serious consideration.

FRENCH KITCHEN.

The Revolution having broken up the French clerical nobility, cookery was brought out from the cloisters, and made to breathe the free and ventilated air of common life, and talents no longer engrossed by the few, were forced into the service of the community. A taste was spread abroad, and a proper sense of gastronomy impressed upon the public mind. Eating-houses, or *restaurans*, and *cafés* multiplied, and skill was brought out by competition to the highest degree of cultivation and development. The number of such houses now in Paris alone, exceeds six thousand. But the shortest way to give value to a profession is to bestow honour and reward upon those who administer its duties, and to this policy, nowhere so well understood as in Paris, the French kitchen chiefly owes its celebrity. I begin therefore with a brief notice of some of its most distinguished artists.

I must premise, however, that in fine arts generally, and eating in particular, America lags behind the civilization of Europe, a deficiency the more to be deplored that ingenious foreigners who visit us, do not fail to infer from it a low state of morals and intellect. How, indeed, entertain a favourable opinion of a nation which gives us bad dinners! I must observe, too, that women are the natural pioneers in this and other matters of taste, and that their special province is to take care their country be not justly at least subjected to these injurious imputations. Men, it is true, are accounted the best cooks, and the kitchen, like the grammar, prefers the masculine to the feminine gender; but this argues no incapacity in the sex, as I shall show hereafter, but a mere physical inferiority. The best culinary critics and natural legislators in this department, are indisputably women. And farther, it is scarcely possible to impress the world with an idea of one's gentility without a studied knowledge of this science, its very language having become a part of the vocabulary of polite conversation. All over Europe it is ranked with the liberal sciences, and has its apparatus, its technology like the rest. Indeed, a very sensible French writer, president of the court of Cassation, has declared gastronomy to be of greater use and dignity than astronomy; "for," says he, "we have stars enough, and we can never have enough of dishes." Nor is it to be looked at as a mere accomplishment to him or her who visits Paris, but a dire necessity. How often, alas, have I seen a poor countryman seated in despair at a French table, scratching his head over its crabbed catalogue of hard names, as a wrecked voyager who looks from his plank upon the desolate sea for some signs of safety—upon its fifty soups, its *consommé; puré, à la julien;* its *casserolle, grenouilles, poulets en blanquets, &c.* Nothing can he see, for the life of him, in all this, but castor oil, green owls, and chickens in blankets.

Some writers do indeed pretend that republicanism is of a gross nature, and opposed to any high degree of polish in this and the other arts. But it is sheer assertion without a shadow of evidence. Surely, the Roman who dined at Lucullus's, with Tully and Pompeius Magnus, in the "Hall of Apollo;" and surely the Athenian, who passed his morning at an oration of Pericles in the senate, who strolled after dinner with Phidias to the Pantheon, who went to the new piece of Sophocles at night, and to complete his day supped with Aspasia, was not greatly to be pitied or contemned by the most flagrant *gourmands* of Crockford's or Tortoni's. These are but foreign and monarchical prejudices, which will wear away under the slow but sure influence of time and the ladies. Indeed, if I am not greatly mistaken, there is a revolution in eating silently going on in this country at this very time. Many persons in our large cities begin already to show taste in culinary inquiries, and a proper appreciation of the dignity of the subject; and, in some instances, a degree of the enthusiasm which always accompanies and intimates genius, and which leaves the question about capacity for the higher attainments indisputable. I know a lady of this city—a Quaker lady—who never speaks of terrapins without placing her hand upon her heart. I shall now proceed, without any apology for selecting the "Lady's Book" as a proper medium, to offer some remarks upon this interesting subject.

The classical school has at its head the name of Beauvilliers, of the Rue Richelieu, No. 20. He was in great vogue at the end of the imperial government, and in 1814, 15, shared with Verry the favour of "our friends the enemy," as he used to call the allies. He left a standard work, in one vol. 8vo, on the *Art de Cuisine*, and closed his illustrious career the same year as Napoleon, and his monument rivals the heroes of Wagram and Rivoli, at Pere la Chaise. He died, too, of a good old age, in the course of nature; while the tap of the drum was thy death larum, Prince of Moscow.

At the head of the romantic school, and ahead at no moderate distance, is Jean de Careme, whose works are in the hands of every one, and whose name is identified with the great personages of his age. His descent is from the famous Chef of Leo X., and is called Jean de Careme, (Jack of Lent,) in honour of a *soupe maigre* he invented for his holiness during the abstemious season. He began his studies with a regular course of roasting, under celebrated professors, served his time to sauces under Richaut, of the House of the Prince de Condé, and finished his studies with Robert the elder, author of "*Elegance Moderne*," a person remarkable not only for his great invention, but for a bad memory, as you may see in his epitaph—

Qui des l'age le plus tendre,
Inventa la soupe Robert;
Mais jamais il ne peut apprendre
Ni son credo ni son Pater.

After refusing nearly all the sovereigns of Europe, he was prevailed upon to become chef to George IV. at 1600 guineas per annum. But at Carlton House he was before the age, and quit after a few months, indignant at wasting his time upon a nation so imperfectly able to appreciate his services. On his return he accepted an appointment from the Baron Rothschild, and remained with "the Jew," dining the best men of a glorious age, and acquiring new laurels till the close of life, with the conscious pride of having consecrated his entire mind to the advantage and honour of his native country.—Drop a tear, gentle reader, if thou hast ever tasted a *soupe maigre a la Pape Pie-sept*, or *Potage a la Rothschild*—a tear upon the memory of Jack of Lent!

Verry, of the Palais Royal, also is of this school, and belongs to the *haute cuisine*. He feasted the allied sovereigns, and has a monument at *Pere la Chaise*, on which you will read this simple inscription,

"His life was devoted to the useful arts."

This is a name also to be revered wherever eating is held in proper veneration—a veritable and authentic artist, seeking fame by no diplomatic trick, no *ruse de cuisine*, but honestly and instinctively obeying the impulses of his splendid abilities. He employed his mornings and heat of imagination in composing—pouring out a vast number of dishes, as Virgil used to do verses of the Æneid, and giving his afternoons, when fancy was cool and judgment predominated, to revisal, correction, and experiment. A person came in once of a morning inconsiderately to consult him, and addressing the waiter, "*Pas visible, Monsieur*," replied the garçon, with an air significative of his sense of the impropriety, "*Il composé;*"—and the gentleman with an apologetic bow retired.

I omit many others of nearly equal dignity, for want of space. There is one, however, of the old school, who, like Homer or Hesiod, announced from afar the future glory of his country, whom I cannot pass altogether in silence—*Vatel*. While in Paris, I went out to Chantilli—the Utica of the gourmands —not, as you may conceive, to see the races, or the stables of the great Condé, that cost thirty millions, or his *magnifique maison de Plaisance*, which opened its folding doors to a thousand guests of a night, but . . . I stood in the very spot in which the illustrious Martyr fell upon his sword—the very spot in which he screamed in glorious agony—"*Quoi le marais n'arrive pas encore!*" and died. Poor fellow! scarce had they drawn the fatal knife from his throat when the codfish arrived. I would give more of this tragical history, but it is told in its beautiful details by Madame de Sevigné, to whom the reader is respectfully referred . . . I must hasten to other branches of my subject.

Houses of established notoriety in Paris, are quite numerous, beginning, most of them, upon the fame of a single dish, and many new ones are struggling into notice by some specific excellence. So ingenious persons often practise one of the virtues, and thereby get up a reputation for all the others. For ices you go to Tortoni's, of course; for a *vol-au-vent*, to the Provincial Brothers; for a delicious *salmi*, to the Café de Paris; to Verry's for *truffles*, and to the Rocher Cancale for *turbots*, *frogs*, and its exquisite wines. The great repute of this house (the Rocher) was originally founded upon oysters. It first overcame the prejudice against those months which are undistinguished by the letter *r*, serving its oysters equally delicious in all the months of the year. It gave a dinner in 1819, which was the topic of general conversation for one month—about two weeks more than is given in Paris to a revolution. The bill is published for the eye of the curious in the *Almanach des Gourmands*. Frogs having been made to talk by Æsop, and looking so very like little babies, when swimming in their ponds, many dilettanti, especially ladies, feel an aversion to eating them; and the French, being the first of the moderns to introduce them generally upon the table, have infixed thereby a stigma indelibly upon the French name, their *brachtrachtonymical* designation being now as significative as the "John Bull" of a neighbouring kingdom. An Englishman being compelled lately to go to Paris on business, and holding frogs in abhorrence, especially French frogs, carried his provisions with him. I take the occasion to state that this was an idle apprehension, and that Paris not only has other provisions now, but that this quadruped is even less common, perhaps, in the French than the English kitchen. But, indeed, to the refined and ingenious it is in good esteem, always—especially to professors, doctors, *savans*, and diplomatists, the classes most addicted to gourmandize in all countries. These do not forget that the same immortal bard who sang of heroes and the gods, sang also of bulfrogs.

The French being naturally a more social people than the English, and being less wealthy, and having less comfortable homes, frequent more public-houses; so that these establishments are, of course, made to excel in decoration and convenience as well as science. Indeed, cookery at home,

and many other things at home, will always want the stimulus necessary to a very high state of improvement. No one of the arts has attained eminence ever, unless fostered by rivalship and public patronage, and brought under the popular inspection. Much is said about the undomesticated way of the French living, but certain it is that the social qualities have gained more than the domestic have lost, and it is certain that the wealthy and fashionable French are after all less erratic in their habits and less discontented with their homes than the domestic and comfortable English. Comfort! comfort! nothing but comfort! To escape, they wander everywhere upon the broad sea and land, and reside among the Loo-koos, Creeks, and Negroes—everywhere disgusted. Where—into what uncivilized nook of earth can you go without finding even their women?

"If to the west you roam,
There some blue 's 'at home.'
Among the blacks of Carolina,
Or fly you to the east, you see
Some Mrs. Hopkins at her tea
And toast, upon the walls of China."

The very genteel Parisians do not incumber their houses with kitchens at all, and that ugly hebdomadal event, a washday, is totally unknown in the Parisian domestic economy. The families dine out in a family group, or by appointment with friends, or the dinner is served in their apartments—a duty which is assigned to an individual you meet everywhere in a white nightcap and apron, and whom they call a *traiteur*. Not a fellow to be quartered and his head set up on the Temple Bar, but a loyal subject, very welcome in the best houses, and dignified as the *entrepreneur general* of diplomatic dinners.

What a gay and animated picture the Parisian restaurant with its spacious mirrors, and marble tables gracefully distributed, with its pretty woman at the contoir, erected for her often at the expense of many thousand francs, and with its linen of the winnowed snow, the whole displayed at night under a blaze of glittering chandeliers, and alive with its joyous and various company! The custom of dining the best bred ladies in these public saloons give them an air of elegance, decency and vivacity it is in vain to hope for under any direction where there is a public separation of the sexes, as in England and America.

Cooking, like the drama, will conform with public opinion, and bad eaters and bad judges of a play are alike the ruin of good houses, and the reputation of the artists. Woe to the gastronomy of a people whose public taste is gross and uncultivated. In those countries where men dine with cynical voracity in fifteen minutes, why talk of it?—*dine*, as Careme eloquently and indignantly expresses it, as if they had craws for the comminution of their food after its deglutition.

I remember about five hundred dyspeptics who used to group themselves about the Red Sulphur, (which they preferred of all the Virginia Springs for the abundance of its table;) how they used to saunter about in little squads, or huddle altogether at the source of the little ruby and sulphurous fountain, and discourse the live long day of gastric juices, peristaltic motions, kneading of stomachs, virtues of aliments and remedies, inquiring diligently into the cause that might be assigned for the almost epidemic prevalence of this disease; some blaming the stars, some hot rolls, others the cacochymical qualities of our American climate, and a few threatened to leave the country. Two Virginia members believed it was the exciting nature of our institutions, and they sat about upon stumps, (these gentlemen having a great affinity for stumps,) pale, abdominous, and wan, and nearly disgusted with republicanism; and there was an Irish gentleman, who had a strong suspicion he might have been changed at nurse, for he was a healthy baby.

These things are better managed in China. Chewing is done, they say, at a large Chinese ordinary, by a kind of isochronical movement, regulated by music. They have a leader, as at our concerts, and up go the jaws upon sharp F, and down upon G flat. I wish our "Conscript Fathers" at Washington, if it would not interfere too much with the liberty of the subject, would take this matter under consideration, and if, themselves, they would chew and digest a little more their dinners and speeches, I beg leave to intimate, it would be not only a personal comfort, but an economy of the money and reputation of the republic. The destiny of a nation, says a sensible French writer, may depend upon the digestion of the first minister. Who knows, then, but the distress that has fallen, without any assignable cause, like a blight upon our prosperity; that the contentious ill-humours of our two houses; their sparrings, duellings, floggings, removal of deposits, expungings, vetoings, and disruption of cabinets, may not be chiefly owing to an imperfect mastication by the two honourable bodies, the president, secretaries, and others entrusted with the mismanagement of the country. Legislation on such subjects is not without respectable precedent. The emperor Domitian had it brought regularly before *his* senate what sauce he should employ upon a turbot. It was put to vote in committee of the whole, and the decree (as related by Tacitus, and translated by the *Almanach des Gourmands*) was a *sauce piquant*.

The entire force of appetite is concentrated in Paris, upon two meals, and an infinite variety of dishes is sought to give enjoyment to these two meals. To dine on a single dish the French call an "atrocity." The precept of the *gourmand* is to economize appetite and prolong pleasure, and therefore intermediate refreshments of all kinds are strictly forbidden. Cake-shops are patronized by foreigners only. Madame Felix—alas, how difficult to resist her seducing little pies!—sells 15,000 daily! If you offer to touch one in company with a Frenchwoman, she insists on your not impairing the integrity of your appetite for the regular meals; and she only remarks, "*C'est pour les Anglais.*"

While the allies staid in Paris, Madame Sullot sold from her room, twelve feet square, of her incomparable *petits patés* 12,000 per day. The Englishman will have his breakfast, will have his lunch, his dinner and supper, and thus anticipating hunger has no meal at all of enjoyment. So, also, is he morose and peevish, snuffing with suspicious nose the flavour of his wine, and approaching his dishes with a degustatory fastidiousness, not unlike that town mouse so well described by Lafontaine. In the cafés you see him alone at his table, spooning his soup, and encouraging appetite by preliminary excitements, or with newspaper, eating and perusing, apparently seeing no one, with an air that intimates the very great honour he does the French nation by dining at all. Moreover, they do not in Paris, as in London, under pretext of giving an appetite, cozen you out of your dinner by oysters. A Frenchman, on a visit to England, once tried this experiment; but, after eating three dozen, he declared he did not feel in the least more hungry than when he began.

The rules of eating of the French table are as accurately defined as axioms of geometry—but these rules I defer to another occasion.

The French Breakfast.—It is not your ghost of a breakfast, tea and toast and the newspaper, to guests eating in their sleep. It is late; it is at eleven; above all it is with appetite sharp from early exercise; it is the ornamental butter of gold in a fine frost-work, as if winter herself had woven it, spicy as Epping or Goshen, and the little loaf and heaving omelet, the agreeable ragout, the fruit and fragrant Burgundy, spread as by the fair hand of Ceres herself upon the snowy linen, bordered blue or red, to enhance its immaculate whiteness. And for those who love better Araby and the Indies, coffee poured from the strainer, fresh and aromatic, into the gilded porcelain, with rich cream, or of a strength to be diluted with more than half milk, poured out exactly at the point of ebullition;—but the Chambertin or Burgundy to refined tastes is better. Coffee, pure, and at its side the little glass of Cognac or Maraschino, worth a pilgrimage to Mocha, is the glorious appendix of the dinner.

The French Dinner.—Atmosphere from 13 to 16 degrees, Reaumur. Dining-room simple, with only mirrors and a few agreeable pictures by Teniers. A light soup introduces this meal, by all means without bread, followed by a gentle glass of claret. A rich and heavy soup, where any thing else is to be served, is a total misconception of a dinner. Then follow, with a nice regard to succession and analogy, fish, poultry, roasts, with the entremets, and finally game. A delicate eater may begin with a *paté* of larks or other *petit plat*, and overleap the fish, which deadens somewhat the sense of delicious aromas; and the dessert is spared always by the very prudent of both sexes. The monstrous desserts are superseded by a better taste. Instead of the Louvre or St. Peter's, of such dimensions as required sometimes the ceiling to be removed, you have now for the robust olfactories a little Gruer cheese—or for the softer sex, perhaps, an ice, a *creme soufflé*, and you may offer a Dutch lady an accompaniment to her coffee, a little Cupid just starting from sugar candy into life. Each service must have the air of abundance. Any apprehension of deficiency, or the being obliged to refuse out of politeness, would check the appetite and natural impulses of the guests. All that you admit upon your plate is to be eaten; in your glass to be drunk; you intimate otherwise the badness of the fare, and insult your host; besides to have the eyes larger than the appetite is proverbially vulgar. No solos are allowed, or "long yarn," as it is styled, and lions are in bad taste. Also, there is no rush of waiters; servants at the slightest hint anticipate your wants, and a tender conversation is never interrupted by the untimely interposition or removal of a dish; observing always that a sentence, though two-thirds gone, should it even be a declaration, is to be suspended at the entrance of a *dinde aux truffes.* No one at table descants on the excellence of a dish or the wine. There is no surprise at what one is used to daily. In conversation gentlemen are to be without pretension, and ladies, if possible, without coquetry, and the mind, by all means, left to its natural impulses. No one is pressed—all is "fortuitous elegance and unstudied grace;" this is one of Johnson's definitions of happiness. In the first course the guest is required to be polite merely; he is expected to be gallant in the second, and at the dessert he may be affectionate; but after the champagne . . . (no rules of propriety are laid down in any of the books.)

In the drawing-room is merry conversation and music, if excellent, tea of a rich flavour, or punch of the best. Together at eleven—in bed at midnight.

The English and French hare with truffles, is a delicacy well worth our canvas-backs. The Roman ladies believed the food of hares improved beauty. Martial, in an epigram, tells of a woman so ugly in his time, as to set hares at defiance. I do not know if the modern hare inherits this beautifying quality, and few of my female acquaintances have any interest in the inquiry. Many sensible people, however, believe there is such efficacy in nourishment, and it is worth consideration. Achilles, they remind us, was fed on lion's marrow, and Madame Grisi, I have heard said, was nourished in her tender years upon nightingales' tongues, a diet much to be recommended to others of the quire, some of whom seem to have been brought up upon bulfrogs.

It is a matter of much interest to those who would dine out to have their sense of eating, as far as possible, refined. By rich persons, who entertain, bad eaters are held in a kind of horror, and shunned as much as tuneless ears by musicians. To serve an exquisite dish to a face that expresses no rapture—it is Timotheus' song to the Scythian, who preferred the neighing of a horse. And well-bred gourmands are known to have applied often certain

diagnostics by which to detect indifferent or refined eaters. When a dish of indisputable excellence is served, it is expected the very aspect of it will excite in a well-organized person all the powers of taste, and any one who, under such circumstances, shows no flashes of desire, no radiant ecstacy of countenance, is noted down at once as unworthy, and left out in subsequent invitations.

The learned author of the *Physiognomie du Gout*, has given three sets of dishes, (I beg leave to translate for your edification,) which he calls *eprouvettes gastronomiques*, or tests of good eaters, suited to three several conditions of fortune—for you are not to suppose a person born in the *Rue Coquenard*, though equally endowed, should have the same acumen as one bred *au premier* in the *Rue Rivoli*, or the vicinity of the *Palais Royale*. Here they are:

FIRST CLASS.

Revenue 5000 francs. (*Mediocrity.*)

A large veal steak, larded, and done in its own gravy.

A farmyard turkey, stuffed with chestnuts, from Lyons.

Tame-pigeons, fattened, and larded with a slice of bacon, done nicely.

Eggs *a la neige.*

A dish of sour-kraut, garnished with sausages, and crowned with bacon from Strasbourg.

Expressions.—Pest! that looks well; we must do it honour.

SECOND CLASS.

Revenue 15,000 francs. (*Easy circumstances.*)

Chine of beef *cœur rose*, *piqué*, done in its own gravy.

Haunch of venison, chopped-pickle-sauce.

A boiled turbot.

Leg of mutton, *presalé a la Provençale.*

A turkey with truffles.

Early sweet peas.

Expressions. — Mami! a delicious spectacle.— This is indeed a *regale.*

THIRD CLASS.

Revenue 30,000 francs. (*Affluence.*)

A piece of poultry, 7 lbs., stuffed with truffles of Perigord till it becomes a spheroid.

An enormous pie of Strasbourg, in form of a bastion.

A large carp from the Rhine, *a la chambod*, richly decorated.

Quails with truffles, *a la Mosle*, laid on pieces of buttered toast, and sweet basil.

A rich pike, piqué, stuffed and soaked in cream of lobsters, *secundum artem.*

A pheasant *à son point*, *piqué en troufet*, resting on a roast, done holy-alliance-fashion.

One hundred asparagus, 5 or 6 lines in diameter, in season, *sauce à l'osmagôme.*

Two dozen ortolans, *à la Provençale*, as described in the secretaire, and cuisinier.

A pyramid of *maringues*, with vanilla and rose. (This last for women only, and men of feminine and delicate habits.)

Expressions.—Ah, milord! An admirable man is your cook! Such dishes are found on your table only.

The last of these bills, our learned author thinks a decisive test of cultivated taste and natural endowments. "I was lately," says he, "at a dinner of gourmands of this third category, and had a fair chance of verifying the effects. After a first course an enormous *coc-vierge de Burbezieux, truffé à tout rompre, et un Gibraltar de foie gras de Strasbourg*, was brought in. . . . In the whole assembly this apparition produced a marked effect, but difficult to be described. Something like the silent laugh described by Cooper. In fact conversation ceased among all the guests. Their hearts were too full! The attentions of all were soon turned to the skill of the carvers, and when the plates of distribution were passed round, I saw succeed each other, in every countenance, the fire of desire, the ecstasy of joy, the perfect repose of beatitude!

Persons are rarely subject to these violent emotions, if not bred in Paris, and to many they might appear exaggerated, but let them look into history. I will cite a few authentic anecdotes in illustration of this part of the subject; and I will show, too, that these gastronomic emotions and elegant dinners do not appertain exclusively to the French, and are marks of a high civilization in all countries.

Fontenelle, dining a friend one day, and his politeness getting the better of his reason, yielded reluctantly to his desire of having the asparagus dressed with butter instead of oil, and went slowly towards the head of the stairs to give orders to this effect. During the absence his friend had fallen down in apoplexy, which, observing at his return, he hastened back to the stairs: "Cook! cook! cook!" he cried out in a subdued voice, "you can dress them with oil!" and he afforded then to his deceased friend the due offices of humanity.

Judge Savarin, hunting one day with Jefferson, near Paris, caught a couple of hares, and they returned home with their game late in the evening. To lighten the way, the American ambassador related to the judge various anecdotes of Washington; and was encouraged to continue for two or three miles by the close attention and meditative air of his companion. But at length the judge awaking up and breaking through his long silence, said, with the decision of one who has made up his mind, "Yes! I will cook them with truffles," Jefferson being about half through the battle of the Cowpens.

Among the Latins and Greeks a great many interesting examples are recorded of the same kind. *Cratinus* seeing his wine spilt, one day, died of grief; he had survived the loss of his wife. His fate is recorded in Aristophanes. *Apicius* sailed to Africa to pass his life there, hearing that the oysters were better than in his native country; but, finding them worse, sailed back again. An epicurean is mentioned by Athenæus, who, having eaten a sturgeon at a meal—all but the head—fell into indigestion, and was given up by the doctors—says he,

"Well! if I must die, I'll thank you to bring me in the rest of the fish." Apicius, as it is well known, spent two millions of dollars upon his table, and when he had but a *fippenny-bit* left, blew out his brains.

Some very creditable instances have been found even in England. Pope, the actor, one day received the invitation of a lord: "Dear Pope, if you can dine on a roast, come at six; we have nothing else." He came and acted accordingly. At the conclusion, however, a truffled hare of most appetizing flavour, was brought in. Astonishment and dismay succeeded in Pope's countenance, as he looked at it, scarce believing his eyes. He took up his knife, tried, but could not . . . At length, after several vain efforts, pushing his plate aside and putting down his knife, he said, tears starting in his eyes, "From an old friend, I did not expect this!"

Of Lady Morgan's France, one of the prettiest pages by far, is her description of a dinner at Rothschild's villa, near Paris, served up by the celebrated Careme, at which she was present. A few sentences of which will show that the fair authoress would have run no risk from M. Gerardin's "*Gastronomical eprouvettes*," and furnish proof, if proof be wanting in a matter of such notoriety, that ladies have talents for eating, when rightly cultivated, quite equal to the other sex.

"With less genius," says her ladyship, "than went to the composition of this dinner, men have written epic poems; and if crowns were distributed to cooks as to actors, the wreath of Pasta and Sontag (divine as they were) was never more fairly won than the laurel that should have graced the brow of Careme for this specimen of the intellectual perfection of his art—the standard and gauge of modern civilization. Cruelty, violence, barbarism were the characteristics of men who fed upon the tough fibres of half fed oxen. Humanity, knowledge, refinement, of the generation, whose tastes and temper are regulated by the science of such philosophers as Careme, and such Amphytrions as Rothschild."

Of the dinner, she says, "It was in season; it was up to the time—in the spirit of the age. There was no *peruque* in its composition, no trace of the 'wisdom of our ancestors,' in a single dish; no high-spiced sauces, no *sauce blanche;* no flavour of cayenne and alspice, no tincture of catsup, and walnut pickles; no visible agency of those vulgar elements of cookery of the good old times. Fire and water distillations of the most delicate viands exhaled in silver dews, with chemical precision,

'On tepid clouds of rising steam,'

formed the *fond* of all. Every meat presented its natural aroma; every vegetable its shade of verdure; *margonnese* was fried in ice, (as Ninon said of Sevigne's heart,) and the tempered chill of the *plombian*, which held the place of the eternal *fondus* and *soufflets* of an Englishman's table, anticipated the shock, and broke it of the exaggerated avalanche," &c. &c.

It is scarcely fair to quote farther of a work so accessible to all, or I would give you also her description of the dining-room, so romantically standing apart from the house, in the shade of oranges; of the elegant pavilion of green marble, refreshed by fountains that shot into the air through scintillating streams. Of the table itself, covered with its beautiful and picturesque dessert, emitting no odour that was not in perfect conformity with the freshness of the scene, and fervour of the season.—"No burnished gold reflected the glowing sunset, nor brilliant silver dazzled the eye; porcelain, beyond the price of all precious metals by its beauty and its fragility; every plate a picture, consorted with the general character of sumptuous simplicity, which reigned over the whole, and showed how well the master of the feast had consulted the genius of the place in all."

Lady Morgan solicited and obtained permission to see and converse with the illustrious chef, who in the evening entered the circle of the saloon, where a feeling and interesting interview ensued. (See her own account of it.) Such honours are every day lavished upon heroes, and surely he who teaches to nourish men is well worth him who teaches to kill them.

Lord Byron has expressed his dislike of "eating women." But his lordship had an infinity of little capricious dislikes. Monsieur Savarin, of much better taste in such matters, describes his "pretty gourmande under arms," as one of the most interesting of objects. From the stimulus of eating she has greater brilliancy of eyes and grace of conversation; the vermilion of her lips is of a deeper dye, and she is improved in all the attributes of her beauty, and in all respects better recommended to our sympathies, as the honey-bee that sips the golden flower is better liked for its appetites. Nothing that is natural can be justly called an imperfection, and I would respectfully suggest in reply to his fastidious lordship that the first temptation of mankind was eating, and that it began with the fair sex.—What I have to say of the English kitchen I reserve to a future occasion.